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Summer Field Report, June-July 2003

W. Ross Silcock

Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, silcock@rosssilcock.com

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SUMMER FIELD REPORT, June-July 2003

compiled by W. Ross Silcock

P.O. Box 57, Tabor, IA 51653

silcock@rosssilcock.com

INTRODUCTION

To begin on a sad note, I want to mention the passing of Roger Sharpe, senior author with Joel Jorgensen and me of *Birds of Nebraska*. Roger was great to work with, enthusiastic and, of course, extremely knowledgeable in many areas. Joel and I both learned a lot from Roger, in different ways, not just ornithologically. We miss Roger.

This summer was, of course, hot and waterless. Any spot with water was a hot-spot. Lake McConaughy, even more than usual, was worth a look, as were Sandhills ponds that generally fared well waterwise. Joel Jorgensen kept us posted on the generally depressing conditions in the eastern Rainwater Basin, where water conditions can change overnight with a heavy rain and quickly induce breeding by marsh-adapted species, notably Yellow-headed Blackbird and Great-tailed Grackle.

Waterfowl were generally routine, although a few species lingered into June to provide unusual mid-summer records; many of these were at L Ogallala. Shorebirds were with us virtually throughout; several late spring records were made well into June, and several species returned in good numbers in July. Passerines were rather unspectacular, although several observers submitted useful data on breeding timing. I urge observers to report dates of eggs, nestlings, fledglings, and broods so as to build our rather meager database.

Breeding records of note included a possible at Hummel Park, Omaha, for Broad-winged Hawk, a young pair of Peregrines unsuccessfully nesting on the Capitol Building in Lincoln, the 9th breeding record for Sandhill Cranes in the eastern Rainwater Basin since 1994, at least 3 pairs of Snowy Plovers fledging young at Lake McConaughy, an amazing 117 pairs of Piping Plovers there also, the first successful Black-necked Stilt nesting away from the Panhandle, and expansion of the Cordilleran Flycatcher breeding range into the Wildcat Hills.

Among the many tidbits in the report, a few are: a record fall count of Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Eurasian Collared-Doves now reported from 59 counties, a new summer site for Chuck-will's-widow, a Broad-tailed Hummingbird in Monroe Canyon June 29, Western Wood-Pewees encroaching eastward into the range of Easterns, a record Bank Swallow count, a tying record late Magnolia Warbler, and an Eastern Meadowlark southwest, in Dundy Co.

There wasn't much for rarity-seekers; I suspect most birders did some serious AC time this summer. Best were a briefly-seen Tricolored Heron, Nebraska's 4th Cave Swallow, a possible Canyon Towhee (the Records Committee will review this one), and the 8th summer record for Pacific Loon. The Curve-billed Thrasher at the Frimann ranch in southeast Sioux Co is still there; Lonnie

Frimann reports that it was trying to help feed robin nestlings! Perhaps the rarest of the summer was an apparent (Western) Whip-poor-will at Wind Springs Ranch in Sioux Co. The vocalizations differ markedly from those of "our" (Eastern) Whip-poor-will.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arbor Day Farm, Otoe Co; BBS: Breeding Bird Survey; BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co; CCM: Clear Creek Marshes, Keith-Garden Cos; CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, Garden Co; FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co; FL: Funk Lagoon, Phelps Co; HCR: Harlan Co Res, Harlan Co; ICSP: Indian Cave SP, Nemaha-Richardson Cos; LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co; LO: L Ogallala, Keith Co; m.ob.: many observers; NC: Nature Center; NGP: Nebraska Game and Parks; NM: National Monument; NNF: Nebraska National Forest; NOURC: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee; NWR: National Wildlife Refuge; PL: Pawnee L, Lancaster Co; Res: Reservoir; RWB: Rainwater Basin, south central and southeast Nebraska; SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co; SHP: State Historical Park; SL: Sewage Lagoon(s); SP: State Park; WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area; WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area; WSR: Wind Springs Ranch, Sioux Co.

GAZETTEER

Kiowa WMA: Scotts Bluff Co;
Monroe Canyon: Sioux Co;
Niobrara Marsh: Knox Co;
Old Stage Hill Road: Scotts Bluff Co;
Ponca SP: Dixon Co;
Sowbelly Canyon: Sioux Co;
Summit L: Burt Co;
Valentine NWR: Cherry Co;
Wagon Train L: Lancaster Co;
Wildcat Hills NC: Scotts Bluff-Banner Cos.

OBSERVERS

AK: Alice Kenitz, Gering;
AR: Alice Rumery, Kearney;
AS: Audrey Sterkel, Sidney;
B: Birdline;
BFH: Bill F. Huser, South Sioux City;
BP: Babs Padelford, Bellevue;
BW: Bruce Walgren, Casper, WY;
CB: Charles Brown, Tulsa, OK;
CF: Carol Falk, Nebraska City;
CG: Carlos Grandes, Geneva y España;
CNK: Clem N. Klaphake, Bellevue;
CWH: C.W. Huntley, Ogallala;
DD: Dean Drawbaugh, Scottsbluff;

DP: Don Paseka, Ames;
DSt: Dave Stage, Elkhorn;
DW: Donna Walgren, Casper, WY;
EB: Elliott Bedows, Bellevue;
ECT: Edna Claire Thomas, Morrill;
EMS: Eric M. Scholar, Omaha;
GC: Gerry Colborn, Cohoes, NY;
GG: Greg Grove, Petersburg, PA;
GH: Glen Hoge, Alma;
GSt: Greg Stoiber, Omaha;
HKH: Helen K. Hughson, Mitchell;
HW: Harley Winfrey, Gering;
JC: Jay Carlisle, South Dakota;
JD: Jim Ducey, Omaha;
JG: Joe Gubanyi, Seward;
JGJ: Joel G. Jorgensen, Blair;
JJ: Jan Johnson, Wakefield;
JLL: Jeanine L. Lackey, Lincoln;
JP: Jan Paseka, Ames;
JSt: Jon Strong, Omaha;
JT: Jerry Toll, Omaha;
KCR: Kathleen Crawford-Rose, Bellevue;
KD: Kathy DeLara, Mitchell;
KP: Kevin Poague, Lincoln;
LB: Laurel Badura, Kearney;
LE: Larry Einemann, Lincoln;
LF: Laurence Falk, Nebraska City;
LO: Linda Ollinger, Wilsonville;
LP: Loren Padelford, Bellevue;
LR: Lanny Randolph, Gibbon;
MB: Mark Brogie, Creighton;
MUs: Moni Usasz, Lincoln;
NR: Neal Ratzlaff, Omaha;
PD: Phyllis Drawbaugh, Scottsbluff;
RG: Ruth Green, Bellevue;
RH: Robin Harding, Gibbon;
RP: Rob Parsons, Winnipeg, MB;
RR: Ron Rogers, Rockport, MO;
SJD: Stephen J. Dinsmore, Starkville, MS;
SMc: Steve McIlree, Omaha;
SV: Steve Van Sickle, Yankton, SD;
TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln;
TH: Thomas Hoffman, Omaha;
TJW: T.J. Walker, North Platte;
TL: Terry Lassek, Bellevue, NE;
TR: Tommie Rogers, Rockport, MO;
WH: Wanda Hoge, Alma;
WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland;
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Pacific Loon: A "stunning" alternate adult was at LO 7-12 Jun (SJD,GC); this is the 8th summer record of the species, most from the west.

Common Loon: A basic probable sub-adult was summering at LO 7 Jun-19 Jul (SJD,GC,TJW,WRS); this is a regular summering location for sub-adults.

Pied-billed Grebe: Reports of breeding were of adults feeding half-grown young at Wagon Train L 5 Jun (LE) and a nesting pair at Kissinger Basin, Clay Co, 12-19 Jul with one bird still incubating 19 Jul (JGJ), somewhat late for this stage of the process.

Eared Grebe: Good numbers were noted in the Sandhills in Jun (AK), including a count of 74 between Alliance and Hyannis 15 Jun (WRS). A "terrific sight" was the 100+ on nests at Bunker L, Sheridan Co, 23 Jun (CNK); this species nests in large colonies, given suitable conditions.

Western Grebe: Unusual so far east for the date was one in Knox Co 1 Jun (SV); possibly the same bird was in Dakota Co 8-13 Jun (BFH). Another easterly bird was in Douglas Co 16 Jun (MB). The summer population at LM appeared settled in at 480 on 7 Jun (SJD); 33 were on LO 12 Jun (B).

Clark's Grebe: At least one pair was summering on LO: 1-3 birds were there 7-24 Jun (SJD,B,GG). On LM, 10 were counted 7 Jun (SJD).

American White Pelican: HCR always has a few in summer; low count was 20 in early Jun, with 500+ present by 24 Jul (GH,WH) as fall movement was underway.

Double-crested Cormorant: Low water apparently precluded nesting for the 2nd year running at HCR; this relatively new colony had as many as 70+ birds on nests in 2001. Several were nesting with Great Blue Herons at Mayhew L, Cherry Co, 22 Jun (CNK; see Great Blue Heron), and an adult with a chick was using a goose nest structure at CLNWR 28 Jun (AK). Only casual in the south and east in mid-summer, one was in se Otoe Co 16 Jun (LF,CF), 2 were in the e RWB 12 Jul (JGJ), and a few were at BOL during the period (LE).

American Bittern: Numbers may be increasing in the e RWB, despite this year's poor water conditions, although the scarcity of water may merely be serving to concentrate the few birds normally present and increase their visibility. Counts of 1-4 were noted through the period; the 4 found 14 Jun were the best Jun count in the area (JGJ).

Least Bittern: One at Nathan's L, Washington Co, 20 Jul (B) was the only report; at that date it might have merely gravitated to a convenient wet place.

Great Blue Heron: Rookeries reported were a group of 7 nests near Sidney (AS), and 30+ nests north of Mayhew L near Gordon Creek, Cherry Co, 22 Jun (CNK); the latter rookery also included some Double-crested Cormorant pairs (CNK).

Great Egret: Numbers are at their lowest in mid-Jun; 2 in the e RWB 14 Jun were only the 4th and 5th Jun records from there, all since 2001 (JGJ). One was in the e RWB 28 Jun and numbers there had risen to 41 by 19 Jul (JGJ). One was near Ames 30 Jun (DP,JP). HCR is a favored spot; 1-5 were there 4-27 Jun (GH, WH), increasing with the fall influx to 67 by 18 Jul (WRS). Uncommon westward, one was at Kiowa WMA 13 Jul (PD,DD).

Snowy Egret: The only reports were of fall birds: 1-4 at HCR 18-25 Jul (WRS,GH,WH); 4 at Moger WPA, Clay Co, 24 Jul (CG); and 2 at L North/L Babcock, Platte Co, 27 Jul (JGJ).

- Little Blue Heron:** The two reports were in Jun, a time when the species is least expected. One was near Ogallala 14 Jun (CWH) and the other, an adult, in the e RWB 28 Jun (JGJ).
- Tricolored Heron:** One was seen briefly in flight 27 Jul at FL (LR,RH; details). This is Nebraska's 7th overall report and 4th documented, the 3rd for fall.
- Cattle Egret:** Good numbers were noted, most in the RWB, with best counts 40 there on 19 Jul (JGJ) and 39 near FL 28 Jul (GH,WH). A few were seen in Jun: 2 in s Dixon Co 10 Jun (JJ), 7 in the e RWB 14 Jun (JGJ), and one near Antioch 17 Jun (BW,DW). This species is rare in the west.
- Green Heron:** A family group was in the observer's tree-filled back yard gully in Bellevue Jul 2002 and at least the adults were present again this year (TL). Near the western edge of the summer range was one at Hayes Center WMA, Hayes Co, 2 Jun (TJW).
- Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Juveniles were noted at two locations where breeding is regular: FL on 28 Jun (LR,RH) and the e RWB 28 Jun, a "very young" bird (JGJ).
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** The 4 reports were from the e RWB, where this species is rare but regular. Although breeding has not been proven in the e RWB, there is a prior report of a "fresh juvenile", and this year another juvenile was found 12 Jul (JGJ). Other reports were of a 2nd-year bird at Moger WPA, Clay Co, 14 Jun (JGJ); another bird there, age unreported, 24 Jul (CG); and an immature at Kissinger Basin WPA, Clay Co, 19 Jul (JGJ).
- White-faced Ibis:** Ten birds at Paterson L, just south of Lakeside, on 25 Jun (GG) were not unexpected for the Sandhills in Jun and are probably failed breeders or immatures (prebreeders); others were at CLNWR and west of Lakeside 28 Jun (fide AK). An adult in the e RWB 28 Jun (JGJ) may have been a non-breeder; a juvenile *Plegadis* ibis (laudably reported as unidentified to species) was noted there 12 Jul (JGJ), most likely fledged elsewhere. A single bird, unaged, was at Kiowa WMA 2 Jul (HW). The possibility of Glossy Ibis and even hybrids between Glossy and White-faced requires caution in identifying these birds when not in high breeding plumages.
- Turkey Vulture:** Routine reports.
- Greater White-fronted Goose:** The only reports were of a holdover from spring at Conestoga L, Lancaster Co, through 9 Jun (LE) and one at LO 12 Jun (GC); there are no records for the Panhandle at this time of year (i.e. close, but no cigar).
- Snow Goose:** The usual scattered reports of 1-2 birds through the period were received, most as expected from central-eastern wetlands where migrants are numerous. Less expected were one as far west as LM 7 Jun (SJD), and easterly singles in Saunders Co 19 Jul (CNK) and Platte Co 27 Jul (JGJ).
- Canada Goose:** Numbers in the e RWB are normally low, with few birds nesting, and those of course are large forms; thus the 37 "large" birds there 14 Jun was a good count, but diminished to only one on 12 Jul (JGJ), undoubtedly a consequence of poor water conditions.
- Trumpeter Swan:** The only report was unsurprising; adults with young were present at a regular breeding site near Whitman 25 Jun (GG).
- Wood Duck:** Broods were reported 2 Jun in Hayes Co (TJW) through 12 Jul in Scotts Bluff Co (PD,DD), a normal range of dates for the species.
- Gadwall:** A male at Hayes Center WMA, Hayes Co, 2 Jun (TJW) was likely a late migrant; breeding is unknown in the southwest.

American Wigeon: First fall arrivals at BOL were 2 on 29 Jul (LE). Such early fall migrants may be molt migrants or failed breeders.

Mallard: Routine reports.

Blue-winged Teal: A small pond in Harlan Co hosted a pair 27 Jun (GH,WH); while breeding away from the Sandhills and RWB is uncommon, breeding has occurred almost statewide.

Cinnamon Teal: One of the males seen at LO this spring was still there 12 Jun (GC); reports are few away from the Panhandle after early Jun. Several males, as well as at least 2 females on nests, were seen at Kiowa WMA 1 Jun (KD); this is the most reliable place in Nebraska to see this species.

Northern Shoveler: Routine reports.

Northern Pintail: Routine reports.

Green-winged Teal: Away from the restricted breeding range in the western Sandhills, late Jun reports are few. FL hosted 1 on 28 Jun (LR,RH) and 2-3 were found in the e RWB 14-28 Jun (JGJ).

Canvasback: Rather local as a breeder, one good spot is Willy L, Sheridan Co, where 4 were seen 15 Jun (WRS).

Redhead: Good numbers were evident again this summer; 126 were in the e RWB 28 Jun, including 95 at a single location (JGJ), and Redhead was the "most abundant duck" along Highway 250 in Sheridan Co 12 Jun (GC). RWB numbers declined to 45 by 19 Jul (JGJ), still surprising given the poor water conditions. No evidence for breeding was noted. At FL, 15 were present 28 Jun (LR,RH) and 3 were at Alma South SL 14 Jun (GH,WH). Breeding was successful at LO, with broods seen below Keystone Dam 18 Jul (TJW). This was apparently the first breeding record for the county, even though the species breeds fairly commonly in the Sandhills to the north. Four were still at Wagon Train L 20 Jun; a male lingered until 8 Jul (LE). There are fewer than 10 summer reports away from known breeding areas.

Ring-necked Duck: Stragglers were 4 in Lancaster Co 5 Jun, with one remaining until 20 Jun (LE) and a male at LO 7-12 Jun (SJD,GC). Mid- to late Jun reports are rare.

Lesser Scaup: A male was at LO 7-12 Jun (SJD,GC), rather late for a migrant.

Bufflehead: A male and female were at LO 7 Jun (SJD); the male had departed by 12 Jun, leaving the female there (GC) to provide a rather late date (no pun intended, of course). Summer reports are few.

Common Goldeneye: Rounding out the small collection of late divers at LO were 3 (adult and juv males, female) there 7 Jun (SJD), with only a male remaining through 12 Jun (GC). This is only the 12th summer report.

Hooded Merganser: The usual number of reports of summering female-plumaged birds was received; a total of at least 22 birds was reported, west to Dundy Co and LM. These are probably immatures. Best counts were the 8 in the e RWB 28 Jun (JGJ) and 7 below Keystone Dam, LO, 12 Jun (B). Breeding evidence is lacking for the state, with only one confirmed record since 1915.

Common Merganser: Spring stragglers were 3-5 at LO through 12 Jun (SJD,GC); the 5 birds there 18 Jul (TJW) were likely the same ones. A drab female or immature, possibly crippled, was at Sutherland Res, Lincoln Co, 10 Jul (TJW). Summer reports away from LO are few.

Ruddy Duck: A few were reported in areas where breeding is not usually noted: two were at Summit L, Burt Co, 9 Jul (DP,JP); one was at Wagon Train L until 5 Jul (LE); and 1-2 were at Alma SL through the summer (GH,WH).

Peak count in the e RWB was the 18 there 14 Jun; only 7 were found 12 Jul (JGJ).

Mississippi Kite: Two reports were from Ogallala, a regular summer location, 5 Jun (MB) and 15 Jun (B). Unusual away from Ogallala, one was near Imperial 6 Jun, moving ahead of a storm (MB).

Bald Eagle: Active nests were reported in Scotts Bluff and Buffalo Cos. The Buffalo Co nest, near Odessa, had 3 juveniles adjacent to it 28 Jun (LR,RH). At the long-established site at L Alice, Scotts Bluff Co, 3 young were fledged for a total of 27 in 11 consecutive years (Brad McKinney, fide AK); the birds located a prairie dog town about a mile away for a food source as the lake was almost dry (AK). Just east of North Platte, in Lincoln Co, adults appeared 15 Jul at a nest that was unused this spring, and on 17 Jul they were accompanied by a juvenile, apparently a family group that nested elsewhere (TJW). Unexpected was an immature along the Verdigre River in Knox Co 8 Jun (WRS).

Northern Harrier: Mallard Haven WPA, Fillmore Co, may be the only breeding site for this species in the e RWB; 3 birds were there 28 Jun (JGJ).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: One in Otoe Co 20 Jun (LF,CF) was present at an unexpectedly late date; such late sightings, if indeed this species, are usually non-breeding immatures. More than half of the reports of Sharp-shins between 5 Jun and 9 Aug are from the southeast, where breeding would seem to be unlikely, and where Cooper's Hawk is rather common in summer. Unless seen well, large female Sharp-shins can be difficult to separate from small male Cooper's Hawks. There is, however, a fairly recent report of apparently successful breeding by Sharp-shinned Hawks in Saunders Co (NBR 62:71,131), only the 3rd report of breeding in Nebraska since 1900.

Cooper's Hawk: A female was carrying food at Victoria Springs SRA, Custer Co, 22 Jun (MB).

Red-shouldered Hawk: The only report was from the usual location at FF 28 Jun (CNK).

Broad-winged Hawk: The only report was of one at Hummel Park, Omaha, 28 Jul (JD). This sighting, together with sightings there in late May, is suggestive of breeding, which occurs on occasion in the lower Missouri Valley.

Swainson's Hawk: One in s Clay Co 28 Jun was at the only known summering location in the e RWB (JGJ), and probably the easternmost site south of the Platte Valley.

Red-tailed Hawk: Routine reports.

Ferruginous Hawk: The only report was almost routine (if sightings of this species could ever be thought routine): one in Kimball Co 14 Jun (WRS).

Golden Eagle: Routine reports (see previous species!)

American Kestrel: Routine reports.

Merlin: A rather late bird was moving ahead of a storm front near Imperial 6 Jun (MB).

Prairie Falcon: Routine reports (but see Ferruginous Hawk).

Peregrine Falcon: There are fewer than 15 summer reports away from breeding locations; one was hunting Cliff Swallows in Nance Co 10 Jul (MB). The following was received from John Dinan, NGP, regarding the pair that nested on the Capitol Building in Lincoln:

"Both adults are banded. The female, 40/B, was raised on a building in Minneapolis, MN, in 2002, and the male, 19/K, was raised on a building in

Des Moines in 2001. We found 2 eggs in the nest platform on May 21; both adults were in attendance and very defensive. There were still just 2 eggs on the 18th of June, evidently a common clutch size for a female this young. Both adults were present and again very defensive of the site. On July 9th, 48 days after the clutch was complete and 18 days past the time of expected hatching, I collected the eggs, as they were clearly not going to hatch. The adults were no longer in attendance although I did see one of them perched on the capitol as I was driving away." This is the second attempt in Lincoln; a banded male frequented the area during most of the 1990s but was unable to bond with any of the females he courted.

Chukar: A released or escaped bird was seen around ADF in Jun and photographed for the local newspaper (fide LF). There is no established population in Nebraska.

Gray Partridge: Encouraging was the presence of adults with 3 young nw of Laurel 15 Jul (DSt). This species is currently at a low population ebb in Nebraska.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Not many young were seen in sw Dixon Co this year (JJ).

Helmeted Guineafowl: An "undoubted escapee" was seen at Wolf L, Saunders Co, 22 Jun (TH). This species would be as unlikely to become established in Nebraska as legalized gambling.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: A few birds straggle southeastward as far as Hall Co, where they are usually seen on booming grounds with the more common Greater Prairie-Chickens of the area. Reports from neighboring Buffalo Co are lacking, and so one seen in flight 25 Jul n of Gibbon (LR,RH; details) was a surprise. Drier conditions in the Sandhills might be a factor if indeed there is some movement to the south.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Continuing good news from the southeast was the presence of a female with 2 young chicks at SCP 7 Jun (KP). Rarely reported from Keya Paha Co, at least one was there 19 Jul (SV).

Wild Turkey: Broods were reported 14-27 Jul (AK,GH,WH,WRS); the brood in Harlan Co 18 Jul consisted of "just hatched" chicks, a rather late hatch time.

Northern Bobwhite: One at West Lawn Cem, Gering, 22 Jun (AK) continues the small population there, unusual in that it is some distance from the Platte Valley itself.

Virginia Rail: This species may breed anywhere in the state; two responded to a tape at the west end of Enders Res, Chase Co, 6 Jun (MB), and reports of single birds at dates suggestive of breeding were from Hayes Co 2 Jun (TJW), the e RWB 5 and 19 Jul (JGJ), and Lincoln Co 17 Jul (TJW). Breeding at these locations, if indeed it occurred, however, is rare.

Sora: Four appeared 12 Jul at wetlands in the e RWB that had been dry 3 weeks prior (JGJ) and 16 were counted 19 Jul (JGJ). These were probably early migrants, as probably was one near Gibbon 22 Jul (LR,RH) and 7 in nw York Co 27 Jul (JGJ).

American Coot: Two broods were at Wagon Train L 5 Jun (LE).

Sandhill Crane: Breeding continues in the e RWB, this year with a family group of 4 sighted 28 Jun at a location where breeding had not previously been noted (JGJ). This is the 9th record of breeding (as evidenced by the appearance of very young birds with adults) in the e RWB since the first report in 1994, but the birds are extremely shy and difficult to detect. JGJ noted, "I believe I

flushed more birds than I actually spotted with optics". In addition, singles were seen in Furnas Co 22 Jun (LO) and in a cattle feedlot near Sinninger Lagoon, York Co, 12 Jul; the latter bird was "rather tame" (JGJ), possibly lulled into a methane stupor.

Black-bellied Plover: None were reported; arrival is at the very end of Jul.

American Golden-Plover: None were reported; few move through in fall, but arrivals are in late Jul.

Snowy Plover: This species is making good use of the extensive habitat at LM, which is nearing record low levels. At least two of at least 3 known pairs fledged young this summer (Gabe Wilson, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, fide SJD). These are the 4th and 5th nest records for the state. Two of these pairs were at Sand Point, where adults and young were seen through the period (SJD,WRS,JSt), including 4 juveniles 21 Jul (JSt).

Semipalmated Plover: Rather late spring migrants were 4 along Highway 250 on 12 Jun (GC); 2nd-latest spring date. Also rather late were 4 at Spikerush WMA, York Co, 9 Jun (JG) and 4 at LM 7 Jun (SJD). First in fall were 5 in nw York Co 27 Jul (JGJ).

Piping Plover: Amazing numbers are using the extensive habitat at near-record low LM: 89 pairs were identified and 117 nests located this summer (Gabe Wilson, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, fide SJD). Of 21 birds seen at Sand Point 21 Jul, 18 were juveniles (JSt), indicative of good success. Two aggregations of post-breeding birds at LM totaled 77 individuals 19 Jul (WRS). Elsewhere, an adult with 3 young was near Ashland 19 Jul (CNK), and 4 were on sandbars in the Missouri River near Niobrara 21 Jun (JC). This species is clearly doing well utilizing artificial habitats.

Killdeer: Young were seen in Otoe Co 28 Jun (LF,CF). From mid-Jul on, large post-breeding aggregations occur. An amazing 1012 were counted in the e RWB 12 Jul, including 231 at a single location (JGJ). At LM, 122 were counted at two north shore locations 19 Jul (WRS), and 89 were at Yankee Hill L, Lancaster Co, 29 Jul (LE).

Mountain Plover: None were reported; the Kimball BBS route came up with none (WRS). These birds can be very hard to locate after young are fledged, moving significant distances from breeding sites as soon as chicks are able.

Black-necked Stilt: This species continues to do well in the western Sandhills and, more recently, at a site south of Morrill, where breeding occurred for apparently the 2nd straight year (KD). At least as surprising was the successful breeding at FL, the first known successful breeding record outside the Panhandle (Jeff Drahota, fide JGJ). Two adults and 2 young were present there 27 Jul (LR,RH). Good numbers were found in the Sandhills: 1-3 were in the Lakeside area, including an adult with 2 young 25 Jun (GG), and "a few pairs" were seen along Highway 250 on 12 Jun (GC).

American Avocet: Rather late for migrants were 3 in ne York Co 9 Jun (JGJ). Nesting continued beside County Road F south of Morrill; at least 3 pairs produced downy young (KD). At regular breeding sites, 27 were counted along Highway 2 between Alliance and Hyannis 15 Jun (WRS). Two at LM 15 Jun were aggressively territorial and were probably nesting (WRS). Breeding has occurred in the e RWB, but 1-3 birds there from 28 Jun through the period (JGJ) were likely non-breeders and/or fall migrants.

Greater Yellowlegs: Singles at LM and near Lakeside 7 Jun were probably northbound, as they were in alternate plumage (SJD). Hitherto, late spring date

- was 31 May and early fall date 10 Jun. First for fall was one at CLNWR 25 Jun (GG), and best count in the early going 31 at Heron WPA, York Co, 4 Jul (LR,RH).
- Lesser Yellowlegs:** First fall migrant was one near Antioch 25 Jun (GG), and best count 384 in the e RWB 12 Jul (JGJ), a good count early in migration, presumably adults.
- Solitary Sandpiper:** One near Lincoln 29 Jun (LE) was rather early. Excellent numbers moved through the e RWB; a record count there of 62 was made 12 Jul, including a record single-location count of 38 (JGJ).
- Willet:** An adult with "3-4 largish chicks" was north of Lakeside 28 Jun (AK). Rare in the east in fall, a presumed migrant was at Maskenthine Lake WMA, Stanton Co, 5 Jul (TJW), and 6 adults were in nw York Co 27 Jul (JGJ).
- Spotted Sandpiper:** Routine reports.
- Upland Sandpiper:** Good numbers were noted in Cherry and Sherman Cos in late Jun (CNK) and "more than in previous years" were seen in Harlan Co through the period (GH,WH). Excellent counts of fall migrants were made in nw York Co on four days, 27-31 Jul, ranging from 98 to 178 (CG); all were better than the previous record high count of 68. The 178 were found 31 Jul (CG).
- Long-billed Curlew:** A nest with 2 eggs was located north of Newport, Rock Co, 8 Jun (DSt). There are fewer than 10 summer reports south of the Platte Valley, most in Chase and Perkins Cos; thus a pair in adjacent sw Lincoln Co 2 Jun (TJW) was a significant sighting. Last at WSR was seen 21 Jul (HKH), about normal as a departure date for the species. There are few Aug or Sep records.
- Marbled Godwit:** The 3 reports included rather early fall migrants and were in the period 7 Jun-4 Jul. On 7 Jun, 6 were at LM and one at CLNWR (SJD); others were 9 at LO 12 Jun (GC) and 2 at LM 4 Jul (JSt). The 7 and 12 Jun sightings may have been early-migrating failed breeders.
- Sanderling:** Likely late spring migrants, and surprisingly numerous, were the 42 at LM 7 Jun (SJD). At a more expected time were 2 in Platte Co 27 Jul (JGJ). There were no other reports; few arrive before Aug.
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** An excellent count for the rather late date was the 121 at LM 7 Jun (SJD); a single there 15 Jun (WRS) and another in the e RWB 14 Jun (JGJ) provided the 4th and 5th latest spring dates, the e RWB bird the latest spring date for the e RWB (fide JGJ). First for fall were 8 in the e RWB 12 Jul (JGJ).
- Western Sandpiper:** The only reports were at an expected time and location: 1-2 in nw York Co 25-26 Jul (CG).
- Least Sandpiper:** Pushing the late spring and early fall envelopes were the 3rd latest 6 at LM and one at CLNWR 7 Jun (SJD), and the 3rd earliest one at CLNWR 28 Jun (AK). By late Jul, 91 were in nw York Co (JGJ).
- White-rumped Sandpiper:** This species, along with Semipalmated Sandpiper can occur in good numbers in Jun, but the 698 at LM as late as 7 Jun (SJD) were a surprise. Peak spring counts are in the 3000 range. Lingers were 6 in the e RWB 14 Jun, latest record there (JGJ), and 5 at LM 15 Jun (WRS). Latest spring dates are Jun 20, 21, and 23; the Jun 21 date is a specimen.
- Baird's Sandpiper:** Two at LM (one with an injured foot) 15 Jun (WRS) and one record late for the e RWB 14 Jun (JGJ) provided the latest (in a tie) and 3rd latest spring records. Fall migrants arrived 12 Jul, with 5 in the e RWB (JGJ), and a good early fall count was the 266 at LM 19 Jul (WRS).

- Pectoral Sandpiper:** None were found in Jun. First for fall were 28 in the e RWB 12 Jul (JGJ), and best count 232 in nw York Co 27 Jul (JGJ), a good count for the early date.
- Stilt Sandpiper:** Last in spring were 4 rather late at LM 7 Jun (SJD), and first in fall were 31 in the e RWB 12 Jul (JGJ).
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** By far the highest fall count on record was the 317 at the Meat Animal Research Center, Clay Co, 30 Jul (Jeff Drahota, fide JGJ). Previous high fall count was 97. The 17 in nw York Co 27 Jul provided the earliest fall date for the e RWB since 1915 (fide JGJ), and 4th earliest on record; 72 were counted in nw York Co 30 Jul (CG).
- Short-billed Dowitcher:** The 2 in the e RWB 12 Jul (JGJ) provided the 2nd earliest ever documented fall date. The only other reports of this low density migrant were of one at Sandpiper WMA, Clay Co, 18 Jul (WRS, details) and one in nw York Co 27 Jul (JGJ). The few dowitchers found at these early dates in fall are usually this species.
- Long-billed Dowitcher:** Last for spring were the 3 rather late at CLNWR 7 Jun (SJD), and one in the e RWB 19 Jul (JGJ) and 2 at LM the same day (WRS, details) were rather early for this species.
- Wilson's Snipe:** Summering birds were noted within the usual range in Scotts Bluff (KD), Morrill (B), and Cherry (CNK) Cos, but one near Brady 11 Jul (TJW) was a bit out of expected summer range but unlikely to be a migrant at such an early date. There are prior summer reports from Lincoln Co, but no evidence of breeding. Singles in nw York Co 29 and 31 Jul (CG) may have been early migrants, although migrants generally do not occur until mid-Aug.
- American Woodcock:** This species occurs as far west as Elm Creek in the Platte Valley (fide LR,RH), but the small population to the east at the Fort Kearny Hike-Bike Trail, Buffalo Co, apparently is now defunct due to excessive numbers of people and dogs (fide LR,RH).
- Wilson's Phalarope:** A male was flushed from a nest with 4 eggs in a sedge clump at LM 15 Jun (WRS). Breeding probably occurs whenever water conditions allow in the e RWB, although there is a paucity of direct evidence; territorial behavior was noted there 12 Jul (JGJ), and adults with a possible juvenile were at Moger WPA, Clay Co, 24 Jul (CG). Best count of summering birds was the 70+ at CLNWR 5 Jul (TR,RR).
- Red-necked Phalarope:** Rather late were 1-2 at Kiowa WMA through 15 Jun (KD); surprisingly, there are several mid-summer records, this being the 9th for the period 2 Jun-21 Jul.
- Franklin's Gull:** Immatures and non-breeders that probably don't return all the way to their natal colonies can be seen in numbers at LM into Jun: 430 were there 7 Jun (SJD) and 158 on 15 Jun (WRS); both aggregations contained about 30% first alternate birds. Departure from breeding colonies usually doesn't occur until mid-Jul.
- Bonaparte's Gull:** The only report was of 2 in first alternate plumage at LM 7 Jun (SJD). This is the 2nd or 3rd latest spring date on record.
- Ring-billed Gull:** Best mid-summer count was the 50+ at Merritt Res, Cherry Co, 22 Jun (CNK).
- California Gull:** Numbers decline in Jun-Jul, although a few birds usually can be found at LM during the mid-summer period; 8-9 adults were at LM 7-15 Jun (SJD, WRS). Interesting was a flock of 84 at LM 19 Jul, a rather early date for such a number; the flock contained 17 adults and the rest looked like 3rd-winter

birds, as their napes were lightly-marked with sharply-defined streaks; this pattern of limited nape streaking and the overall paleness of their mantles (similar to adjacent Ring-billed Gulls) was suggestive of the interior-breeding *albertaensis* (WRS). This flock probably was made up of non-breeders that left a breeding colony early or may have not returned to the colony at all in early spring.

Herring Gull: Only 3 were reported, all at LM: two first alternate birds on 7 Jun (SJD) and a 2nd-summer bird 15 Jun (WRS). This species is uncommon in mid-summer.

Caspian Tern: The only reports were from Lancaster Co, where 4 were at BOL 9 Jun (LE), and singles were at Holmes L, Lincoln, 20 Jun (LE), and at BOL 23 Jul (LE). Jun sightings have become routine in western Nebraska in recent years, but similar eastern records are rare. Fall migration gets underway in late Jul.

Common Tern: Surprising, and thus carefully observed, were alternate-plumaged birds at two locations: 4 at Penn L, Neligh, 7 Jun (WRS, details), and one at Willy L, Sheridan Co, 15 Jun (WRS, details). A few birds which "sure looked like" this species although "seemingly out of range for the date" were near Whitman 25 Jun (GG). There are a few other documented records into mid-Jun.

Forster's Tern: Migrants appear in the south and east as early as late Jun; 6 were at BOL 29 Jun (LE), and one at Lewis and Clark L, Knox Co, 2 Jul (SV) may have been a migrant also. Breeding occurs in the w Sandhills; one was carrying food near Highway 250 in Sheridan Co 12 Jun (GC) and another was at Smith Lake WMA, Sheridan Co, 23 Jun (CNK).

Least Tern: Reports were widespread from within the expected breeding range, totaling some 70+ birds, an encouraging sign. Best count was 28 in the Niobrara area 7 Jun, including 14 on one sandbar in the Missouri River where at least 2 birds appeared to be incubating (WRS). At least 25 birds were in the same area 21 Jun (JC). Two of a group of 6 at Loup Junction WMA, Howard Co, appeared to be nesting 8 Jun (LR,RH), and one was near Fullerton 11 Jul (MB). An apparent new site was the private Lake Socorro development just south of Schuyler, where at least 9 birds were visible from the highway 29 Jun (JSt). Flying young birds were noted below Keystone Dam, LO, 18 Jul; they appeared to have bred on an island in the North Platte River some distance below the dam (TJW). One was carrying food north of Ashland 19 Jul (CNK). Sandbars appeared in Wehrspann L, Omaha, this year, and an adult there 18 Jul may have been nesting (BP,LP). At LM, best count was the 11 at Sand Point 19 Jul, several of which were aggressively territorial (WRS). Other reports at likely breeding locations were of 1-6 at Wolf L, Saunders Co, through the period (TH); one near Gates, Custer Co, 19 Jul (LR,RH); and 2 along the Platte River near Schramm SP 7 Jun (GC). Migration begins in late Jul; 2 were at L North/L Babcock, Platte Co, 27 Jul (JGJ), and one was at Wagon Train L 23 Jul (LE).

Black Tern: Best spring counts were the 236 at LM 7 Jun (SJD) and 136 as far southeast as Lancaster Co as late as 9 Jun (LE). As many as 21 were still in the e RWB 12 Jun (JGJ); breeding is undocumented there. Two in the e RWB 28 Jun were considered fall migrants (JGJ), and "several hundred" were in nw York Co 27 Jul (JGJ).

Rock Pigeon: Routine reports.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: This species is now widespread, especially in the western half of the state. Best count was the 4+ pairs which are established at Cody Park, North Platte (RP). Reports from the east were of 2 in Seward 29 Jun (JG), 2 in Memphis 19 Jul (CNK), and 4 in Elmwood 23 Jul (CNK). New county records were provided for Box Butte (7 Jun, SJD), Dawes (7 Jun, SJD), Frontier (21 Jul, JSt), Howard (8 Jun, LR,RH), and Seward (29 Jun, JG), bringing the total to 59 counties.

White-winged Dove: Along with the preceding species, this species is also mounting a northward range expansion. Recent years have seen a major increase in Nebraska records, with half of the total of 25 records occurring in 2001-2003, including an amazing 8 so far in 2003. Following the 3 spring reports, one was as far east as Seward around 25 Jun (fide JG), and others were at Cody Park, North Platte, 15-20 Jul (RP,JSt, photos), Gering 1-6 Jun (fide AK), Imperial 6-9 Jun (Merrill and Sylvia Humphreys, fide RG), and at Morrill 1-14 Jun (ECT).

Mourning Dove: A sizeable group was the 42 in one mile in s Lancaster Co 5 Jul (LE).

Black-billed Cuckoo: Only four of this elusive bird were reported: singles in Cedar Co 9 Jun (SV); West Ash Canyon, Dawes Co, 14 Jun (WRS); near Brady 22 Jun (JG); and in Knox Co 19 Jul (SV). This species is an uncommon statewide breeder.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: An adult was feeding 3 fledglings in Saunders Co 19 Jul (CNK), and one was carrying food at Neale Woods, Washington Co, 26 Jul (CNK).

Barn Owl: The usual reports from the LM area involved singles 7-12 Jun (SJD,GC), and 2 were at CLNWR, a regular location also, 7 Jun (SJD). A surprise in the east, where it is rare, was one which flew across a road at dusk east of Seward 17 Jun; the observer had previously recorded only two (both dead) in the county in 21 years (JG).

Eastern Screech-Owl: Urban yards may provide some protection from larger owls; a family group of 4-6 birds was present in a Dundee, Omaha, yard for 2-3 weeks through 27 Jun (EMS).

Great Horned Owl: Routine reports.

Burrowing Owl: Excellent numbers have been reported from the Panhandle, especially Scotts Bluff Co, in recent years; in Scotts Bluff Co an amazing 30+ were found near Buffalo Creek WMA 22 Jul (KD) and 11 were counted on the Murray Lake BBS 2 Jul (HW). A family group including 5 juveniles was near Kiowa WMA 14 Jul; the observer saw all of the young except one being fed (KD). An interesting location was the Scottsbluff Landfill, where 5-9 were seen 5-8 Jul (PD,DD). Four broods, including one of 7, were near Gordon 22 Jun (CNK). None were reported east of CLNWR.

Barred Owl: Uncommon away from the Missouri Valley, one was roadkilled north of Scribner in Dodge Co 16 Jun (MB).

Short-eared Owl: None were reported.

Common Nighthawk: Routine reports.

Common Poorwill: Good counts were the 9 at Chadron SP, Dawes Co, 27 Jun (GG) and 8 on the road after dark along Old Stage Hill Road 19 Jul (KD).

Chuck-will's-widow: At the regular location near Wolf L, Saunders Co, one was heard through the period (TH). A new site was east of Lincoln at 198th and Van Dorn, where one was heard for a few nights through 12 Jun and was there

last year also (fide KP). This species is locally distributed in southeast Nebraska.

Whip-poor-will: The first record of this species in her home county, Sioux Co, was a surprise for the veteran observer 25 Jun (HKH). A check of tapes indicated that the song heard matched that of the southwestern United States subspecies *arizonae*, which the observer had heard previously in Arizona. This subspecies is very likely to be a separate species (Western Whip-poor-will) from the eastern birds (Eastern Whip-poor-will), as it differs markedly in its vocalizations. This is the first Nebraska record of this taxon, although it has been reported from Saskatchewan, Montana, and central Colorado (AOU Checklist, 1998). There had been no reports of Whip-poor-will from the Panhandle prior to this report, although there are two from eastern Colorado, thought to be of the eastern subspecies. The only other reports of the species were from Cedar and Knox Cos 1-9 Jul (SV).

Chimney Swift: Routine reports.

White-throated Swift: The only reports were from Scotts Bluff Co: 1-4 birds through the period (TJW, HW).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: A few reports from Keith Co in mid-summer (i.e. Jun) of birds assumed to be this species, including a nest in Ogallala, came to hand (fide CWH); there was a prior report of 1-2 attending a feeder in Jun 2001 near LM. If nesting could be documented in Keith Co, it would be the westernmost for the state. The only other report of westerly nesting was from the Kearney area in the 1950s (*Birds of Nebraska*). A female at Bohemia Prairie WMA, Knox Co, 7 Jun, was near the expected western edge of the summer range in the Niobrara Valley (WRS).

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: Intriguing was the presence of one in Monroe Canyon 29 Jun, identified by the loud buzz in flight (GG). This is the only Jun report of the species in Nebraska; fall migrants appear soon after mid-Jul. Breeding occurred at one time in the Black Hills of South Dakota, but not in recent years, and has not been documented in Nebraska. A fall migrant female appeared at a Scotts Bluff Co feeder 27 Jul (KD).

Rufous Hummingbird: All reports were from a single Scotts Bluff Co yard; a female appeared rather early 9 Jul, and up to 6 were present through 31 Jul, including 3 adult males, a juvenile male, and 2 females (KD).

Belted Kingfisher: Young were seen at ADF 27 Jun and 6 Jul (LF,CF), and 2 adults with 3 nearly grown young were at Wagon Train L 29 Jul (LE).

Red-headed Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: Fledglings were seen in Lincoln Co 18 Jul (TJW).

Downy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Hairy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Northern Flicker: One in Smiley Canyon, Sioux Co, 14 Jun was rather yellow-shafted for the location and time of year (WRS). Most summering birds in this part of the state are introgressants and mainly salmon-shafted.

Pileated Woodpecker: No reports were received.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: The only report was of one in Burt Co 1 Jun (MB).

Western Wood-Pewee: Of interest in that it would have been the easternmost summer record for Nebraska if within the state was one was singing on the South Dakota side of the Missouri River, but only a short distance northwest of Niobrara, 21 Jun (JC). Another was south of Norden, in Brown Co, 22 Jun (B). There is only one other Brown Co report and one from Keya Paha Co

(both in Jun) this far east in the Niobrara Valley. See next species.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: The potential for study of interaction between the two wood-pewees exists in the Niobrara Valley from Valentine east, considering the occurrence of a Western Wood-Pewee as far east as the Niobrara area, where Eastern Wood-Pewees are common. An Eastern was singing within about 50 yards of the Western Wood-Pewee noted above on 21 Jun (JC). An adult (Eastern!) was feeding fledged young at FF 28 Jun (CNK), and nestlings were being fed at Neale Woods, Washington Co, 26 Jul (CNK); the latter would seem to be a rather late date for young to be in the nest. Most eggs are laid in the second half of Jun.

Willow Flycatcher: There were reports statewide of summering birds, as expected. Best counts, probably migrants, were the 5 at Nathan's L, Washington Co, 26 Jul (JGJ) and 3 at FL 27 Jul (LR,RH).

Alder Flycatcher: The only report was of a calling bird in Burt Co 1 Jun (MB).

Least Flycatcher: The only report was of one at LO on 7 Jun (SJD). There are a few summer reports for this species in the state, most from the north and west, but evidence of breeding is scant.

Cordilleran Flycatcher: This species is rather common and probably expanding its range eastward in the Pine Ridge and, it seems, southward into the Wildcat Hills. A significant finding was a pair at a nest not far from the Wildcat Hills NC; the nest, about 8 feet up on a cliff, was discovered 24 Jun (TJW, LB), and nestlings were likely present 3 Jul (HW). This is the first summer record from the Wildcat Hills.

Eastern Phoebe: Routine reports.

Say's Phoebe: Routine reports.

Great Crested Flycatcher: An adult was feeding nestlings at FF 28 Jun (CNK).

Cassin's Kingbird: A visiting birder found this species at probably the 3 most reliable locations it occurs: the canyon south of Redington, Morrill Co, the upper part of Monroe Canyon, and the Limber Pine area south of Interstate 80 Exit 1, Kimball Co (GG).

Western Kingbird: Best counts were the 50+ near Buffalo Creek WMA, Scotts Bluff Co, 27 Jul (KD), probably a pre-migration aggregation, and the 35 on the Murray Lake BBS route, Scotts Bluff Co, 2 Jul (HW).

Eastern Kingbird: Routine reports.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: One of this rare and almost regular species was found east of Seward 3-4 Jun (Lloyd Kaufman, fide JG).

Loggerhead Shrike: This species was "numerous" in the CLNWR area (AK) and in Sheridan Co (CNK) in late Jun. It is doing well in western Nebraska grassland areas.

Bell's Vireo: One observer in Lancaster Co (LE) thought there were fewer than in previous years.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Routine reports.

Plumbeous Vireo: Routine reports.

Warbling Vireo: An adult was feeding fledglings at Ponca SP 12 Jul (CNK).

Red-eyed Vireo: This species declines in abundance southwestward in summer; singles were at West Lawn Cem, Gering, 6 Jun (AK), Old Stage Hill Road 4 Jul (AK), and near Gordon 22 Jun (CNK). It is fairly common, however, on the Pine Ridge: 5 were in Monroe Canyon 14 Jun (WRS).

Blue Jay: Routine reports.

Pinyon Jay: A family group of 3-4 birds was in Smiley Canyon, Sioux Co, 14 Jun (WRS). Although possible, the young may not have hatched in the area (or even in Nebraska). These birds are generally inconspicuous while breeding.

Black-billed Magpie: Routine reports.

American Crow: Routine reports.

Horned Lark: Routine reports.

Purple Martin: At least one in Rock Co 19 Jul (SV) was near the west edge of the range in northern Nebraska; westernmost are in Ainsworth. The western limit of occurrence in the Loup drainage is unclear; one was at St Paul 8 Jun (LR,RH), 5 at Broken Bow 20 Jul (LR,RH), and 3 at Arnold 22 Jun (MB). There are few reports further west in the drainage. A few occur throughout the Republican Valley; 6 were on a martin house in Benkelman 7 Jun (MB). Best count was the 14 at ADF 29 Jul (LF,CF); migrants are on the move by then.

Tree Swallow: Reports are few along the Republican Valley; nest boxes near HCR dam were being investigated by a few birds 6 Jun (GH,WH). Another low-density area for the species is the Sandhills; one was at CLNWR 28 Jun (AK). Aggregations are seen in early fall; 115 were at BOL 23 Jul (LE).

Violet-green Swallow: Best count was 11+ at a YMCA camp along the North Platte River in Scotts Bluff Co 24 Jun (TJW); presumably these were foraging birds from the nearby Scotts Bluff NM.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Routine reports.

Bank Swallow: An excellent count for spring (no juveniles about yet) was the 1200 at LM 7 Jun (SJD). This is by far a record count.

Cliff Swallow: Enormous flocks occur in fall in the RWB; a single concentration of 1500 was noted there 12 Jul (JGJ), but the tally is dwarfed by the highest counts in the area, 30,000 and 12,000.

Cave Swallow: Perhaps not surprising from the standpoint of location or observer, a juvenile was netted a few kilometers north of LO 8 Jul (CB). This is the 4th Nebraska record, all by the same observer in the vicinity of LM. Dates are in the range 31 May-8 Jul.

Barn Swallow: Fledglings were first noted 28 Jun, at opposite ends of the state, ADF (LF,CF), and CLNWR (AK). Second broods are not unusual in southern parts of the range, but there are no specific data for Nebraska, which is somewhere in the middle. Thus of interest was a pair on the observers' house that were working on their second brood 29 Jul after fledging 5 young in their first brood; two were fledged from the second brood (LR,RH). The date is rather late, although the latest Nebraska egg date is 13 Sep, presumably also a second clutch.

Mountain Chickadee: A song reminiscent of Mountain Chickadee was heard in the canyon south of Redington 27 Jun (GG); although the presence of a Mountain Chickadee cannot be ruled out, it has been known for some time, since first noted by Dick Rosche in the early 1970s, that occasionally songs of Mountain Chickadee are sung by Black-capped Chickadees in the Wildcat Hills. We need some mitochondrial DNA studies!

Tufted Titmouse: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Reports were from known breeding areas, although breeding evidence for the Wildcat Hills area is minimal; one was at West Lawn Cem, Gering, 22 Jun (AK). Others reported were singles in Monroe Canyon 12 Jun (GC), and at Chadron SP 27 Jun (GG) and 5 Jul (TR,RR).

White-breasted Nuthatch: One along the North Platte River in Scotts Bluff Co 2 Jul (HW) adds to the few recent summer records there. The observer did not mention the subspecies, but recent evidence points to these birds being eastern birds spreading westward along the Platte Valley, as has been the case recently for Red-bellied Woodpecker and Northern Cardinal.

Pygmy Nuthatch: Reports were from known breeding areas: Monroe Canyon (GC), Chadron SP (GG,TR,RR), and Wildcat Hills, where an adult was with a juvenile 24 Jun (TJW).

Brown Creeper: The only report from FF, where probably no more than 1-2 pairs continue to hang on, was of a single bird 7 Jun (GC).

Rock Wren: Good numbers were reported in the southwest (TJW) and west (TJW,HW). Few are reported east of Keith Co.

Carolina Wren: Reports were all from expected locations in the southeast.

House Wren: Fledglings were noted at ADF 28 Jun (LF,CF).

Sedge Wren: After spring migration, Jun records are few; 2 birds in the e RWB 14 Jun were the first for Jun for the e RWB (JGJ). At the end of Jun and especially in Jul, returning birds become obvious, often attempting to nest. First were 3 at Wagon Train L 29 Jun (LE), and a significant record, only the 7th nesting record for the state, was that of an adult feeding young at Walnut Creek L, Sarpy Co, 6 Jul (CNK). At the west edge of the summer range were 2 in Kearney Co 27 Jul (LR,RH).

Marsh Wren: Routine reports.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Routine reports.

Eastern Bluebird: Although increasing in the west, mainly as a result of nest-box availability, an apparent first county and southern Panhandle breeding record was that of a pair that fledged 4 young in Cheyenne Co 12 Jun (AS). At least 78 young were fledged at ADF through 31 Jul (LF,CF), where an extensive nest-box trail exists.

Mountain Bluebird: Routine reports.

Veery: Rather late was one at CLNWR 7 Jun (SJD); netting records showed that 1-2 Veeries were caught each year at CLNWR in the 1970s (Fred Zeilemaker). All of these reports are presumably of the western subspecies, *salicicolus*.

Swainson's Thrush: Last of the spring migrants were singles near Imperial 6 Jun (MB), and at LO and CLNWR 7 Jun (SJD); migrants are fairly common in early Jun in the west. Rather late for the east, however, was one in Dixon Co 2 Jun (JJ).

Wood Thrush: Most reports were from the expected range in the east, but most unexpected was one at CLNWR 7 Jun (SJD). This is only the 4th Panhandle report for the first week of Jun; all were likely late migrants. The western limits along the Platte River are unclear; singles were in Merrick Co 18 Jul and across the river in Hamilton Co 10 Jul (MB).

American Robin: Routine reports.

Gray Catbird: Good numbers occur west to central Nebraska; 23 were tallied in Custer Co 19 Jul (LR,RH). Catbirds are rare in the southwest, where one was at Hayes Center WMA, Hayes Co, 2 Jun (TJW), and in the nw Sandhills, where one was at Smith Lake WMA 23 Jun (CNK).

Northern Mockingbird: Of about 19 reported, all were from south of the Platte Valley except for two: one was reported on a BBS route in n Garden Co 17 Jun (BW,DW) and the other in Butte 19 Jul (SV). There are few reports north of the Platte Valley.

- Brown Thrasher:** A nest with young was found at Walnut Creek L, Sarpy Co, 10 Jun (GSt).
- Curve-billed Thrasher:** The bird that wintered at the Frimann Ranch in se Sioux Co was still present at the end of the period, 31 Jul. Clearly endowed with fatherly instincts, he had taken to trying to feed nestling American Robins, which caused a ruckus and may have been the cause of one of the young robins falling out of the nest (fide Lonnie Frimann).
- European Starling:** The first flock of juveniles was rather early: 75 or so near Winnetoon on 7 Jun (WRS).
- Cedar Waxwing:** Small numbers were reported through the period statewide; breeding can occur anywhere, but the only specific report of breeding was of adults with 2 young at Fort Kearny, Buffalo Co, 12 Jul (AR). The 10 adults near Alma 18 Jul (GH,WH) were a puzzle; perhaps they were failed breeders.
- Tennessee Warbler:** Latest spring date is 11 Jun; one singing at Ponca SP 8 Jun (WRS) and another at St Paul 8 Jun (LR,RH) were thus rather late. The latter bird was a little west of the normal spring migration route.
- Northern Parula:** Two adults were with a juvenile at FF 28 Jun (CNK); breeding evidence is rarely reported for this species in Nebraska, even though there is a significant summer population.
- Yellow Warbler:** Adults were feeding fledged young in Saunders Co 19 Jul (CNK).
- Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler:** Individuals were found in the Pine Ridge east to Chadron SP 27 Jun (GG); there are few summer reports east of Chadron SP and no breeding evidence east of Dawes Co. A pair was doing a colorful feather-by-feather distraction display in Monroe Canyon 14 Jun (WRS).
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** The only report was of one singing and carrying insects at Neale Woods, Washington Co, 26 Jul (CNK). Breeding probably occurs here; the date is rather late for the species on its breeding grounds.
- Magnolia Warbler:** Last was one in Creighton 4 Jun (MB), tying the record latest date.
- Cerulean Warbler:** None were reported.
- Black-and-white Warbler:** Two different females were seen carrying food in Monroe Canyon 14 Jun (WRS). There are few confirmed breeding reports from the Pine Ridge, although the species is a fairly common summer resident there.
- American Redstart:** This species is common in summer along the Missouri Valley; 16 were counted at Ponca SP 8 Jun (WRS). An adult male was feeding a fledgling at Hummel Park, Omaha, 27 Jul (WRS). Males and females were still singing at Neale Woods, Washington Co, 26 Jul (CNK). A few straggle into Jun away from known breeding areas; one such was in Chase Co 6 Jun (MB).
- Prothonotary Warbler:** The only reports were from FF 1-28 Jul, including a singing male 18 Jul (BP,LP).
- Ovenbird:** Rather surprising was one at CLNWR 7 Jun (SJD), presumably a late migrant. Also surprising was the finding of only one at Ponca SP 8 Jun, despite covering a couple of miles of upland trails (WRS). Perhaps the presence of large numbers of deer is a factor. Few occur along the Platte Valley in summer, thus one in Merrick Co 18 Jul (MB) was of interest.
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** The only report was nevertheless significant: a pair was feeding a young bird at FF 28 Jun (CNK). Although summering occurs most years at FF, breeding evidence is rarely reported.

Kentucky Warbler: The only report was of one in se Otoe Co 4-20 Jun (LF,CF). Despite the lack of reports this season, this species has increased in eastern woodlands in recent years.

MacGillivray's Warbler: A surprise was a singing bird in Monroe Canyon 14 Jun (WRS). This report, along with the presence of a possible family group in the same canyon in 1999 (EB) is suggestive that a small breeding population may be establishing there. The species breeds in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Common Yellowthroat: The abundance of this species in marsh habitats is indicated by the amazing estimate of 105 at FL 27 Jul (LR,RH). Although the presence of migrants is possible at this date, this species is not usually an early migrant, and there is extensive habitat at FL.

Yellow-breasted Chat: This species is doing well in the Panhandle; it was "common" in Monroe Canyon 14 Jun (WRS) and "everywhere" in Scotts Bluff Co 24 Jun (TJW).

Summer Tanager: The only reports were of 1-3 at ICSP, a regular location (LF,CF,BP,LP).

Scarlet Tanager: Reports from the west edge of the range were of one south of Norden in Brown Co 22 Jun (B), two birds singing along the Verdigre Creek in Knox Co 8 Jun (WRS), and one at Albion 24 May-12 Jun (NK, photo). Other reports were from the Missouri Valley.

Western Tanager: A good count was the 4 in Monroe Canyon 14 Jun (WRS).

Spotted/Eastern Towhee: After a report of 2 unspotted birds, one singing a Spotted Towhee song, on the Brady BBS route 22 Jun (JG), a discussion ensued on NEBIRDS regarding the bewildering mix of plumages and songs to be heard over most of Nebraska. In Lincoln Co, songs are "not reliable as an identifier" (TJW); a towhee at NNF, Halsey, had "color patterns that didn't clearly fit either one, nor did the song" (CNK), and in the Gibbon area, there are 3 times as many Spotted as Easterns, with hybrid numbers in between (LR,RH). Even in the northeast, there was a "rather bizarre mix" at Ponca SP and along the Verdigre River (WRS). In Merrick Co, a phenotypic Eastern was found along with several Spotted 1 Jun (MB). It has been known for some time that hybrids occupy most of the state, and an individual bird should have both plumage and song matching either Spotted or Eastern for one to be somewhat sure of the identification. Areas where hybrids are essentially absent are limited to the Panhandle and the extreme southeast.

Spotted Towhee: Routine reports.

Eastern Towhee: Routine reports.

Canyon Towhee: Intriguing was a belated report of an individual of this species at George Syas WMA, Platte Co, 5 Jul 2000. Details provided are suggestive of this species, although perhaps do not conclusively eliminate a juvenile Spotted/Eastern Towhee or a female or immature Blue Grosbeak, either of which, or a variant of either, would be far more likely. There is only one prior report, that not accepted by the NOURC.

Cassin's Sparrow: Reports from the north edge of the previously known range may be a result of the extremely dry conditions in the southwest and southern Panhandle. At least one bird was noted both near Harrison 8 Jun (HW) and on a BBS route north of CLNWR 17 Jun (BW,DW). Silent birds thought to be this species were near Kilpatrick L, Box Butte Co, 27 Jun (GG), a known summering location. Also within the known breeding range were at least 3

calling birds at 3 locations south of Imperial 8 Jun (MB).

Chipping Sparrow: Routine reports.

Brewer's Sparrow: The only report was from Kilpatrick L, Box Butte Co, 27 Jun (GG), a known summering location.

Field Sparrow: Westerly were 2 singing birds at Enders Res, Chase Co, 19 Jul (WRS); this species is reasonably numerous south of the Platte Valley west to Colorado. A good count was the 20+ at Niobrara SP, Knox Co, 12 Jul (CNK).

Vesper Sparrow: Few are reported from the east; the only reports were of singles at ADF 1 Jun (LF,CF), Lancaster Co 5 Jun and 29 Jul (LE), Dixon Co 12 Jun (JJ), Cedar Co 30 Jun (SV), and 6 birds in Dixon Co 31 Jul (JJ).

Lark Sparrow: An adult was feeding 2 fledglings at Limestone Bluffs WMA, Franklin Co, 12 Jul (LR,RH).

Lark Bunting: Large numbers, 400-500, were in w Sioux Co 15 Jul (PD,DD). Two flocks of 30 were seen at Buffalo Creek WMA, Scotts Bluff Co, 27 Jul (KD).

Savannah Sparrow: This species is only marginal as a summer bird in Nebraska, mostly in the north, although there are scattered summer records throughout the Sandhills. One was reported in Arthur Co 26 Jun (GG).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Good numbers were reported statewide from native grasslands, including SCP in Lancaster Co (KP,LE).

Henslow's Sparrow: This species is sensitive to vegetative stage in the southeast Nebraska grasslands that it occupies; none were present at Meadowlark L, Seward Co, where they had been in previous years (JG), and 3 were at SCP 7-13 Jun, but in a different area from last year (KP). The 3 birds at SCP were considered a "typical number" there (KP).

Song Sparrow: Westerly was one near Dalton 3 Jul (HW); this species is an uncommon breeder in the Panhandle. An excellent number was the estimate of 50 at FL 27 Jul (LR,RH); as with Common Yellowthroat, there is extensive habitat for this species at that location. Young were seen at ADF 30 Jun (LF,CF).

Swamp Sparrow: Reports were from FL, a known location: singles 28 Jun and 27 Jul (LR,RH); Wood Duck WMA, Stanton Co, where 3 were singing 13 Jul (BP,LP); and Knox Co 19 Jul (SV). This species summers in cattail marshes mostly in central Nebraska, but is patchy in its distribution.

Harris's Sparrow: This species occasionally lingers into summer; one in s Dixon Co 8 Jun (JJ) was the 6th record for the first half of Jun; there are 5 others through Aug.

Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco: None were reported.

McCown's Longspur: Reports were from the usual summer range in Sioux Co (HW,GC). None were found on a Kimball Co BBS 14 Jun where usually a few occur (WRS). Conditions conducive to rank grass growth may have been a factor (WRS).

Chestnut-collared Longspur: As with the preceding species, reports were from known locations in Sioux Co (HW,GC,WRS), but surprisingly none were found on a Kimball Co BBS route 14 Jun for the first time in several years; grass growth would not have been expected to have precluded this species' presence (WRS).

Northern Cardinal: One south of Gering 1 Jul (AK) was at a new location removed from the immediate Platte River Valley; numbers are growing in Scotts Bluff Co, albeit still small.

- Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Near the western edge of the summer range, 3 at Russell Park, Neligh, 7 Jun showed no signs of hybridization (WRS; see next species), and a good count was the 12 at Dannebrog 8 Jun (LR,RH).
- Black-headed Grosbeak:** Easterly were one near Gibbon 14 Jul (LR,RH), a regular location, and a female at Russell Park, Neligh, 7 Jun (WRS, details). The latter bird showed no signs of hybridization; spring migrants occur this far east with some regularity.
- Blue Grosbeak:** Good numbers were noted in Hayes (TJW) and Harlan Cos (GH,WH). Reports were statewide.
- Lazuli Bunting:** One reported on a BBS route near Brady 22 Jun (JG) was rather far east for the date; although spring migrants do occur most years in the east, summer records east of the Panhandle are few. This is the 3rd summer report for Lincoln Co.
- Indigo Bunting:** This species occurs in small numbers in the Panhandle; one was seen on Old Stage Hill Road 4 Jul (AK).
- Dickcissel:** This species is rare in summer in the Panhandle, but there were 7 reports this summer of single birds 14-28 Jun, at least two adjacent to alfalfa fields. Many such birds sing for a while then depart (fide Dick Rosche). An Oklahoma study (Roy Churchwell) found that males left the study area in late Jul; movement by males in Jul might contribute to some good Jul counts: 32 at SCP 8 Jul (LE), 20+ at Niobrara SP 12 Jul (CNK), and 22 in Dixon Co 24 Jul (JJ). The movements of this species in Jun-Jul may approach those of Sedge Wren in their complexity.
- Bobolink:** The 9 at SCP 13 Jun was the best tally there so far (KP), an encouraging sign of improving habitat. This species molts early, prior to fall migration; one in Dixon Co 31 Jul was "molting fast" (JJ). Reports were statewide.
- Red-winged Blackbird:** Routine reports.
- Eastern Meadowlark:** One near the Farm Service Agency in Benkelman (no doubt lobbying for the CRP program), seen several times through 12 Jul (TJW), is only the 3rd record west of HCR and south of the Platte River.
- Western Meadowlark:** Routine reports.
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** During May in the e RWB, water conditions were such that this species and Great-tailed Grackle, both of which breed in dense cattails, were essentially absent. However, they became common at sites which filled after heavy rains 12 Jun, "an impressive reaction time" (JGJ). Fledglings (Yellow-headed Blackbird) were noted in the e RWB by 12 Jul (JGJ).
- Brewer's Blackbird:** The only reports were from the northwest Nebraska breeding range, Sioux Co east to Walgren L, Sheridan Co, where one was seen 12 Jun (GC). Several were found among regenerating pines in Smiley Canyon, Sioux Co, 15 Jun (WRS).
- Common Grackle:** A small flock of juveniles was in Nebraska City 26 Jun (LF,CF). Best count for the period was the 150 in s Dixon Co 16 Jul (JJ).
- Great-tailed Grackle:** See comments under Yellow-headed Blackbird, above. Best count was 54 in the e RWB after being essentially absent in May (JGJ). One at CLNWR 17 Jun (BW,DW) was unexpected; there have been surprisingly few reports from Sandhills cattail marshes, although a male was in a Logan Co marsh 22 Jun (MB). A pair with 3 begging juveniles was near Odessa 28 Jun (LR,RH). Westerly was one in Chase Co 10 Jun (MB); Kiowa WMA in Scotts Bluff Co is the only regular Panhandle site.

Brown-headed Cowbird: A Chipping Sparrow was bravely feeding a cowbird fledgling twice its size at Fort Kearny, Buffalo Co, 12 Jul (AR). Best count was 300+ at a feedyard east of Gering 24 Jul (PD,DD).

Orchard Oriole: An adult was feeding young near CLNWR 28 Jun (AK). A good count was the 21 in Custer Co 19 Jul (LR,RH).

Baltimore Oriole: Routine reports.

Bullock's Oriole: The only reports were of singles in the usual summer Panhandle range (SJD,GC,AK,JSt).

House Finch: The presence of one in Gordon 22 Jun (CNK) is interesting; the first record at Hyannis was in 1993, and spread through the Sandhills has been slow, presumably because of the lack of human population centers. The Gordon sighting may be the first there.

Red Crossbill: Although breeding has not been documented in the Wildcat Hills, the presence of juveniles and family groups at the Wildcat Hill NC feeders is suggestive; a "family group or two" were there 24 Jun (TJW), and a single bird was seen along Old Stage Hill Road 4 Jul (AK).

Pine Siskin: The only report was of one in a s Dixon Co yard 2 Jun (JJ); apparently it did not stay.

American Goldfinch: Routine reports.

House Sparrow: Routine reports.